

still have no passes for the Pope's talk tonight at the University of Habana, but now I am not as upset. I decided that I want to interview Salvadore and get his viewpoint of all this religious ferver that has invaded the island this week from the point of view of a Santeria priest. I watched the news from home briefly this morning and the headlines were all about another sex scandal that involved the president. As a journalist, I just refuse to even comment on the absurd yellow tint that seems to have permeated even respectable news institutions. It is so obvious to anyone with a brain that this whole thing is being promoted, funded and fueled by the religious right like the ongoing feud between the WWF and the NWO. Fidel and the Pope are not Sting and Hollywood Hulk Hogan. Nor are they Bill Clinton and

Monica Lewinsky(enjoy your fifteen minutes honey). They are two of the most powerful men on earth meeting in Habana the results of which could possibly lead the way to events that will have world changing effects, yet all three networks have pulled their anchors to go back home to cover a sex scandal. There is an old saying in France that a politician is safe from public ridicule as long as he doesn't stick his dick in a dead woman or a live boy. Our puritanical American slant, which dates back to the witch trials in Salem, makes us the laughing stock of the world, once again. That is all I have to say about that. Of course, it is stupid to drag your pen through company ink. The President may need to go to therapy, but he certainly doesn't need to be impeached.

Meanwhile back in Habana, I have a meeting in town. We had dinner last night at another paladore where I was introduced to Tomas, who worked at the Institute of Music in Habana and he had invited me to come to the institute, meet his boss who runs the show and they would like for me to see what the Institute was about. I still subscribe to the fact that music is the universal language and provides avenues of communication that are not tainted by politics. I have spent nearly half of my life in these islands, hopefully not as a tourist, but as one who is interested in the history and culture of the Caribbean. We arrived at the Institute shortly after eleven. It is in another section of Habana just off of Avenida de la Presidente which is row after row of beautiful buildings. The Institute itself is housed in the former residence of Mr Upmann, the famous cigar manufacturer. Tomas greeted us at the desk and took us to the office of Alicia Mana, president of the Institute of Cuban Music. She was a most gracious and hospitable lady, who told me a delightful story of her visit to Key West on her first of three honeymoons and complimented me on my music and my career and welcomed me to Cuba. She explained to me the function of the institute in teaching music and the problems that they face in promoting music. There was a good deal of political ideology sprinkled into our discussions and the embargo of course was an evil force that had crippled the business of music in Cuba. As much as I had heard everyone in the country blame all of their troubles on the embargo, it only became more obvious to me that if the embargo was lifted, then there would have to be a lot of accountability by the Cuban government to their people, because it would expose the inevitable failure of socialism which nobody here is ready to deal with. In order to have a revolution, you have to have an enemy. Take away the enemy and Fidel would have a lot of explaining to do. I listened politely to Alicia explain her view of the world of music in Cuba and then added a few comments. As far as I was concerned, one of their most important but underrated natural assets, was Cuban music. Everybody in Cuba sings or plays the guitar. The average Cuban cannot go to tourist clubs or hotel bars, so they gather at night along the Malecon with a bottle of white rum and a guitar and sing to the ocean. It reminded me of a time in my life when I used to do exactly the same thing in Key West on Mallory Square. It was an enjoyable and informative morning with Alicia and Tomas. It was obvious that she had clout. There were two very large pictures of her and Fidel hanging in her office above her desk. I took advantage of the opportunity to ask if she could help us get into the Pope's address at the University that evening. She just shook her head and told me that it was controlled by the Vatican and that the Cuban government only had a few seats themselves, but she gave Tomas a pass that she had around her neck and said that with it, we could go and watch the rehearsal for the Pope's mass that was going on at the moment in La Plaza de la Revolucion. I immediately accepted. We said good-bye and drove to the Plaza.

sold out

It was getting hot, and though there was a big tent over the altar in the Plaza, I wondered how the Pope would handle the heat. From seeing him on TV, he kind of moves like the Duracell bunny whose batteries are finally wearing out. The five day forecast was calling for cold front passage over the week-end. We were backstage at sound check, which always is more fun that the actual gig. I got to stand right in front of the Cuban National Orchestra and a five hundred voice choir as they went through their rehearsal. There was a stand-in for the Pope up on the altar, taking directions from a thin black man who seemed to be running the show. I wondered how you got the job as the Pope's stand in. The music was incredible and put goose bumps up and down my arms. The Plaza was deserted, but in two days, there would be a show like none in Cuba had seen before. That was going to be exciting and I wanted to be a part of that crowd. It was my job for the week, but I also just wanted to say I had been there when the Pope said mass in Cuba.

Friday Afternoon

I did a quick interview with CNN at their bureau office on the 20th floor of the Habana Libre Hotel and then we stopped again at the Hotel Nacionale, my newly discovered rally point in the city for a Cuban mix and a Coke and then went to see Salvadore. He again greeted us warmly and I brought him a copy of Rolling Stone and several of my tapes. You only have to leave America for a short time and go to a place like Cuba to understand how lucky we are. Not just in terms of abundance of everything, but how much we take for granted. Salvadore looked at the magazine as if it were the Dead Sea Scrolls. I had to explain to him what it was and he seemed very interested and agreed to do the interview the next day. The Pope was going to Santiago and then come back to spend the evening with a group of lepers in San Lazaro. Hell, at this point, I was done trying to get into his functions. As we left Salvadore's gallery, I strolled slowly again looking at the mural and I knew I was in the right place at the right time. As yet I didn't know what the story was, but I knew that it was here.

Sunday Morning – Habana

It's Super Bowl Sunday in San Diego and probably not so good a morning for Bill Clinton in Washington,

but in Cuba, God is watching over the Pope. The cold front moved across the northern coast of Cuba last night after the ball game and I awoke before dawn to the sound of rain on deck, but by the time I got up the line of squalls had pushed on through to the south. The wind is blowing twenty to twenty five knots out of the northwest and as I head for town in my rental car I am witness of one of the great free shows of Habana. In winter, the cold fronts literally crash into town. The waves in the Gulfstream reach epic size and come crashing headlong against the Malecon. Towers of spray rise at random along the seawall twenty to thirty feet into the air spilling across the entire four lane road before filling the gutters and falling back into the sea. It is quite a site. There is a high gray overcast and the air is much cooler than the day before. The Pope and the expected crowd of over a million will be spared from the tropical sun on this Sunday. There are not many cars out this morning. I don't know if it is because of the salt spray and the obvious damage it would do to the old cars, or the fact that everybody is at mass in the Plaza de la Revolucion.

I am late for Mass, but I have a good excuse. We were greeted this morning by the harbour master at the marina with the news that the port had been closed. I could see a gunboat bouncing on top of the six-foot seas on the horizon as I ate my cereal in the pilothouse. Boy, that was not envious duty today. I figured like our prolonged ordeal at customs upon entering the marina that it had to do with Papal security and headed off to town to the Sevilla hotel to pick up Patrick. However, the word on the coconut telegraph buzzing through the lobby of the hotel was that a gunboat had rammed a boat from Miami that had attempted to enter Cuban waters. I didn't like the sound of that. I had been here before. The last time I tried to leave Habana was the day the U.S. invaded Grenada and nearly wound up being a hostage while we were detained for six hours at the airport. I wanted to make sure that the airport was still open and that we would be able to fly out as scheduled later that afternoon.

Our plan for the morning was simply to see how close we could get to the Pope. We still only had our Rolling Stone Press passes and no official Cuban government credentials. Our plan was to make our way to the press area and try and bullshit our way into the area and work ourselves as close to the stage as possible. We were operating on the old "beg forgiveness not permission" scenario, along with our experience of knowing how to sneak backstage at rock n roll shows. Ernesto drove us through a labyrinth of alleys and side streets back until we finally ran into barricades about a half-mile from the Plaza. We were on our own. Again, it seemed more like a day at the Mardi Gras than going to mass. There was no traffic, just lines and lines of buses and vans. The streets overflowed with people looking more like they were out for a Sunday morning stroll than going to mass. There were food vendors up and down the streets and even a few of the stainless steel beer vats from near the ballpark had been wheeled out. We just moved with the flow of the crowd and then walking turned into shuffling and we were packed like sardines with the rest of the pilgrims. At this point, we made the first of several attempts at an end run to the press area, only to be met by men in various coloured uniforms and machine guns hanging from their shoulders who just pointed fingers in the opposite direction. At one intersection, we actually saw the Pope mobile parked up the street. We all put on our Rolling Stone Press passes and Patrick approached one of the soldiers speaking as he walked. All we got was the same finger, pointing in the same direction. Years of sneaking backstage and being sneaked up on backstage had not prepared us for the kind of security that was in the streets of Habana that day. I was disheartened. The streets were now jam-packed and there was no forward movement. I think the million souls that were expected had gotten up a little earlier than us. The height and the distance of the Jose Marti monument told me we weren't even close to the Plaza. I was about to call it quits and head back to the hotel and resort to watching mass on TV, when from behind us I saw the flashing lights of an ambulance approaching. In true socialistic fashion the crowd in front of the ambulance parted like the Red Sea to allow the vehicle to pass. It was a miracle and I didn't waste any time in becoming part of it. In true capitalistic New York taxi cab fashion, I told Patrick and Mike to jump in the space right behind the ambulance. We rode the wake of the ambulance through the sea of pilgrims until it stopped and the rear doors opened. With our red press passes and an air of confidence we moved the



crowd back for the surprised medical personnel, and when they were gone used the steps of the vehicle to get a better vantage point above the crowd. The Pope was now clearly visible in his green vestments and we listened to the music from the choir and part of his speech. I know that if we had wanted to, we could have made our way through the crowd the remaining hundred yards to the press area, but I was actually having a better time with the fold. They waved their flags, chanted slogans praising the Pope and were truly excited by the events of the day.

Sunday Afternoon – Callejon De Hamell

We are on our way out of town. The port is still closed. They tell us it is for our own protection. Right. The good news is that the airport is open and our plane is on the ground. We will make it home for the Super Bowl, but first we stop for a visit with Salvadore. We are only a few blocks from the alley about to turn, when a large policeman on a motorcycle pulls into the intersection and points at us to stop. I am scared shitless, because I have no idea what is going on. The cop stays on his motorcycle, which is a good sign and then several black Mercedes zoom through the intersection. "It's Fidel", Patrick calls out excitedly. I want to get out of my car with my camera, but I have second thoughts about being a white boy running towards El Jefe. Besides, there is no crowd in front of us. We have a ringside seat to the procession as it passes by. Several cars move by, and then by God there is Fidel, waving from the backseat of a Mercedes 560. He is still in that suit he has been wearing the whole time the Pope was here. If the sight of El Jefe isn't enough, right behind him the Popemobile comes into view and Juan Pablo is doing the Papal wave to the shocked pedestrians who have stopped in their tracks on the sidewalk. Obviously nobody knew they would be coming. We watch the whole procession and then the motorcycle cop pulls off and we make our turn. Thirty seconds later I park in the shadow of Salvadore's giant mural. The sound of primitive drums is in the air and I follow them down the alley.

We are all laughing in amazement at the coincidence of time and events that had brought us to the intersection and then the ally, but are immediately swept up by the sight of what was happening in the alley. The ritual was already in progress. Salvadore was presiding over the ceremony dressed in a bright red cape and carrying a palm frond. The air was thick with smoke and incense and Salvadore stirred the smoke at irregular intervals. Several black men and women whose bodies were painted with ritualistic symbols were acting out a very African feeling pageant of sorts. I got a lot closer to Salvadore than I had gotten to the Pope, but I knew that this is not the time to be sociable. I stuck to documenting the dance with my video camera, which promptly quits as the batteries go dead. I am pissed. I forgot to charge my extra battery as well. Well, I haven't' done this journalism thing for awhile so I forget the camera and get into the goings on. I climb up a nearby telephone pole to get a better view. On the way up Salvadore sees me, and gives me a smile then returns his energy to the intensity of the dance. He was right, there is a lot of positive energy blasting off and everyone is getting into it, but I have to be the one to check my watch. We stay as long as we can, but we have to leave before the airport is closed at four. Reluctantly we return to our car and head for Jose Marti Airport.

I leave Cuba knowing I will return. I leave the alley knowing I will see Salvadore again. I can't say where or when, but I know these things will happen. I can't say the same for Juan Pablo. We say our good-byes to Patrick and Ernesto at the airport. I can't believe I have been in Cuba for five days. My story was only supposed to be 5000 words but I know it will be more like 35,000. I have picked up that Cuban habit of making a thirty-minute morality play out of a one-minute conversation. The green land disappears as we climb into the gray overcast and Cuba becomes a daydream again. What are the odds of seeing Fidel, the Pope and Salvadore all within a minute in the middle of Habana on one of the most crowded days of the year. Hell, when I get home tonight I am going to bet on the Denver Broncos and take the points.

Jimmy Buffett reporting from Cuba





Singer / songwriter Jimmy Buffett, a longtime member of BMI's famous "millionaires" club (so given once a song has surpassed a million performances), was just presented with a very special award to mark a career milestone: Buffett's signature hit, "Margaritaville," now qualifying as a Four-Million Performance Song, an honor very highly regarded by BMI, the performing rights organization.

The facts and figures on what exactly four million performances equals is staggering: Based on a recorded time of three minutes, "Margaritaville" has hit over 200,000 hours of airplay, or 21 years of continuous airplay.

Performance figures are determined from the logged reports of approximately 500,000 hours of airplay submitted by U.S. radio networks, plus local AM and FM outlets, and a census of six million hours of television.

The tropical rocker's music and annual summer tours have spawned legions of fans, affectionately dubbed Parrot Heads, who flock to the shows creating instant sell-outs and tailgate parties that resemble South Sea fashion shows, complete with wild floral print shirts and flamboyant hats.

Buffett's latest venture is a collaboration with Pulitzer Prize-winning author, Herman Wouk, on a musical adaptation of Wouk's famous novel, "Don't Stop The Carnival," which completed a successful seven-week run in Miami and garnered Buffett and Wouk a Carbonell Award for Best New Work. The Carbonells are given annually for regional theatre excellence by the South Florida Critics Association. Margaritaville Passes Four Million Performance Mark



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BREAST





If a cult can be defined as a "faddish devotion" and a classic as a work of "enduring quality," then "Rancho Deluxe" would fit both descriptions. The picture has grown in critical stature over the years, and attained a loyal following among viewers in the process. Rancho Deluxe sounds like a social commentary to some extent, but is also a funny and poignant look at characters trying to make it in the modern world without compromising their often devious behavior in the process. Part of the film's unique charm comes from its low-key, decidedly humorous script by novelist Thomas McGuane.

Parrot Heads will be particularly interested to hear Buffett's original soundtrack recording of "Wonder Why You Ever Go Home," which was later recorded for Buffett's album "Changes In Latitudes, Changes In Attitudes". Also, Buffett's follow-up album, "Son Of A Son Of A Sailor",

contained a new performance of "Livingston Saturday Night," which is heard here in it's original, unexpurgated version including some salty lyrics well representing the rough and tumble anything goes attitude of the protagonists of Rancho Deluxe. Buffett scored Rancho Deluxe in part because of his relationship with writer Thomas McGuane, who happens to be Buffett's brother-in-law. The recording took place in a studio in Nashville, where television sets were set up so that Buffett and his fellow musicians could view sections of the film while they played. Subsequently, the filmmakers matched Buffett's varied score with the scenic visuals...and the result is gritty country music. Yet throughout, the music is distinctively the work of Buffett, who worked with a talented ensemble of musicians in composing his score.

More than twenty years after its original release, Rancho Deluxe holds up as an energetic and lively motion picture with sharp dialogue, offbeat characters, perfect pacing, vivid direction, as well as a fantastic soundtrack. It is a true cult classic that will contin-

> ue to entertain and surprise new viewers as time continues to march on.

This is the first and only time that the man from Margaritaville known for his down-toearth melodies and incisive lyrics - scored an entire motion picture.



C.F. Martin & Co. Honors Jimmy Buffett

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Inspired by his fondness for the Florida Keys, Jimmy chose a windswept palm tree for the headstock of his signature model. The palm leaves are delicately cut with Paua shell. Green rippled abalone pearl is used for the trunk, and the cluster of five coconuts is cut from brown lip mother of pearl. The assembled palm tree inlay is set below the Martin gold foil logo.

The ebony fingerboard is adorned with the Martin 42 Style snowflake inlay pattern with Jimmy Buffett's signature inlaid in pearl between the 19th and 20th frets. Each instrument will bear an internal edition label individually numbered in sequence and personally signed by Jimmy Buffett and C.F. Martin IV, Martin's chairman and CEO.

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> > Martin Guitar dealers will take orders for the Jimmy Buffett HD-JB18 Limited Edition Guitars immediately, though due to demand for Martin instruments, this edition will not be available until the late summer of 1998. As with all Martin guitars, the construction process takes both time and expertise. Only 424 of these guitars will be made.

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Behind the Counter...

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Photo: C Mary Elder

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The Margaritaville Store is busting at the seams. We're into our 13th spring break. It's hard to believe the springbreakers who came into our store over a decade ago are now dreading the thought of their kids on spring break. And we're still here...living and dying in three quarter time.

The first weekend inCLUB February we finagled the powers that be out of 25 West Palm Beach concert tickets, and the Margaritians and couple a of stowaways were off on a well-stocked Go Go Tour bus to watch the boss at work. First off, a dinner backstage - thank you Kino - and cocktail(s) in the reception room. Then off to our seats for the concert.

Just when you think it can't get any better, our favorite coach from our favorite NBA team, the 1st place Miami Heat, Pat Riley joins Jimmy on stage for the Parrot Head national anthem - Margaritaville.

Then it's back on the bus for the five hour ride home. A Jimmy Buffett concert, free dinner, a couple of cocktails on the house, and someone else is driving home - it doesn't get any better than this.



This issue contains a pblocking of a different sort. Musicians saddened by the loss of fellow recording artist Nicolette Larson, gathered for a benefit concert at the Santa Monica Civic Center. A rock all star team appeared, raising money for the UCLA Childrens Center.

Appearing at the Santa Monica Civic Center were Jimmy Buffett, Little Feat, Bonnie Rait, Joe Walsh, Dan Fogelberg, Linda Ronstadt, Crosby, Stills & Nash, Carole King, Emmy Lou Harris, Jackson Browne and many other wonderful musicians. Jimmy sang Stephen Stills' "Treetop Flyer", "Margaritaville", and as a special request from Graham Nash, "If The Phone Doesn't Ring It's Me". Everyone joined in the finale "You've Got A Friend" led by Carole King.

Proceeds from the performance went to the UCLA Childrens Center



Los Angeles/PRNewswire/ - Nicolette Larson's first job in the recording industry was as a secretary for the Golden State Bluegrass Festival, but it wasn't long before she was performing as a solosit and as a background singer with various bands. Her first significant break came when she was hired as a singer with Hoyt Axton's band and later with Commander Cody and his Lost Planet Airmen. She was soon on her way to becoming one of the top background vocalists in the business, recording with key musical figures Emmylou Harris, Linda Ronstadt, Michael McDonald, Neil Young, Christopher Cross, Steve Goodman, The Dirt Band, Jesse Colin Young, and the Doobie Brothers.

Within five years of her arrival in California, Nicolette found herself at the top of the pop charts with "Lotta Love," the Neil Young penned classic. Her recording of that song remains the definitive version. "I got that song off a tape I found lying on the floor of Neil's car," she once said. "I popped it in the tape player and commented on what a great song it was. Neil said, 'You want it? It's yours.'"

Ms. Larson released six critically-acclaimed albums (four for Warner Brothers and two for MCA) during her career. Her work garnered many awards including Best New Vocalist by both Cashbox Magazine (1985) and the Academy of Country Music (1984). She was awarded Performance Magazines Best Female Vocalist in 1979 and a similar honor the following year at the Disc Jockey Music Awards.

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